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THE MISSIONARIES AND THEIR CRITICS.

BY THE REV. JUDSON SMITH, D. D., CORRESPONDING SECRETARY OF
THE AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR
FOREIGN MISSIONS.

IF any explicit reason were to be given for this utterance on a matter already well before the public, it would correspond closely to that with which the writer of the third Gospel, in the first four verses, introduces his narrative. An official correspondence with the missionaries of the Board located in Peking and many other principal cities in China, continued through more than sixteen years, never closer or more ample than during the past seven months, has given me special opportunity for prompt and full acquaintance with the course of events. A visit in person to these very scenes three years ago, which lasted several months and was devoted to the study of the missionary work in all its features, lends me a further advantage in understanding the situation. While other sources of information common to all have not been neglected—and these, in many instances, are of great value—the statements which follow rest chiefly on the authority of these correspondents, who have been long in China and are familiar with the history and customs of the people, and who have been at the very center of the most critical movements of these last months.

We all remember that dispatches from China last summer, during the siege in Peking and the time immediately before and after that event, were sometimes misleading, sometimes absolutely without foundation—a fact due, not always to the fault of those who sent them, but to circumstances beyond their control. It was necessary to wait for corrections, or for further particulars, in order to be sure that we were dealing with the real facts in the case. Letters from responsible sources, though slow in coming, were found to be of special value in giving a clear and con-

nected view of the situation. And though matters have improved since the siege was raised, caution is still needful in receiving news from the Far East.

The events which have attracted special attention of late, and about which this article particularly concerns itself, pertain to the Chinese refugees who were robbed and driven from their homes by the fury of the Boxers last June, and to the measures taken since the siege to care for them and re-establish them in their homes. Many other things have happened in and around Peking, not among the missionaries and their charges, very closely affecting the honor and good name of the Christian nations, from even a scanty recital of which we shrink back astounded and ashamed, of which a high authority has recently said in public: "The Church has been set back, nobody knows how long, by the behavior of Christian nations in China." It is not, however, these events which are now attracting public attention, and which are here considered, but those which pertain to the missionaries and their native protégés. Attention is especially directed to what two of their number have done, namely, the Rev. W. S. Ament, D. D., and the Rev. E. G. Tewksbury, both missionaries of the American Board, the former twenty-three years in service, the latter eleven. These gentlemen have maintained a high standing among their associates for ability, good sense, and all manly, Christian qualities; and to-day the officers of the Board have an unshaken confidence in their integrity and sound judgment. To us who know them, it would be unworthy and ungrateful not to speak the truth and clear their names at once from calumny, and set their brave, whole-hearted deeds in the light of day, and claim for them the honor and praise which they deserve. These two gentlemen have been especially prominent, because, in the missionary groups in Peking, it fell to the lot of each of them to provide for a large body of Chinese refugees. In doing this, they have discharged a duty which rested on the whole body of their associates, they have continually consulted their colleagues, and followed their judgment, and their course has been mentioned with approval in the letters of their associates and formally indorsed by the mission as a body.

The proper background of the present situation in China is the Boxer movement of a year ago. Those bands of half patriotic, half religious fanatics had been in evidence for more than

a year before the siege of Peking, and, with the connivance of Yü Hsien, the governor, had produced great disturbances in the province of Shantung. But a year ago, with the open or covert approval, if not the authority, of the government at Peking, these bands became far more numerous and destructive. They spread themselves over three provinces, they attracted volunteers from the villages where they were harbored, they spread terror and anarchy all the way from the Yellow River to the Great Wall. The rising tide of opposition to foreigners, studiously fostered by the Empress and the leading influences at court, was made effective through this movement. The efforts of the Boxers were directed especially against the native converts, because of their connection with the foreigners. These converts were crushed by heavy fines, they were robbed, they were driven from their homes, and in due time they were slain by hundreds and thousands. The movement gathered sufficient headway at length to direct its destructive agencies against foreigners themselves, and many scores of missionaries, railroad men and those engaged in other business, lost their lives at different points. Railways were torn up, stations destroyed, hospitals, churches and foreign residences were looted, burned and razed to the ground; the country was filled with havoc and terror, and the movement culminated in the siege of Peking. All treaties with foreign powers were thrown to the winds; China defied the world; the Imperial Army joined the Boxers in deliberate, long-continued efforts to exterminate the Legations, the marines that guarded them, the missionaries and all other foreigners that had taken refuge therein. Happily, this outrage failed of its object; the allied armies at the last moment raised the siege; the Empress, the court, the Boxers and the Chinese army fled; and Peking was in the hands of foreign Powers. These deeds of blood and nameless horror, this open challenge to the world, and this overwhelming collapse, precede and explain the condition of things with which we deal.

When the siege was raised, the missionaries were left with great bodies of native Christians utterly dependent upon them for everything. The missionaries themselves were left without homes, without resources, with these hundreds of homeless, helpless people looking to them for aid. The situation was extraordinary. The convulsions of the siege had not subsided. Chaos reigned within Peking and in the country around it. Attention

cannot be too strongly called to the abnormal conditions in northern China precipitated by the fury of the Boxer movement, which culminated in the siege of Peking and continue to this very day. The Imperial government was paralyzed, provincial and local government was interrupted, foreign forces held Peking, Tientsin, the road between them and the way to the sea.

Messrs. Ament and Tewksbury, of the American Board, like the missionaries of other Boards in similar positions, felt that it would be intolerable for them to suffer those Chinese refugees, who had helped during the siege and won encomiums for the share they had borne in it, to perish, as they must if something were not done in their behalf. The case was urgent. These natives were without homes, without food, and without means of obtaining either; food and shelter for the very next day, and then for the days after that, must be found. Delay meant starvation and death. In the absence of all native authority, with the knowledge and approval of Mr. Conger and other Ambassadors, two colonies were established in different parts of Peking, in courts abandoned by their owners, and were supported from the resources that were found in those courts; just as the Ambassadors and all the rest in the siege had been kept alive by what they found within their reach from the British Legation.

All that was done by Dr. Ament and Mr. Tewksbury, in occupying these two courts and in supplying the immediate, pressing necessities of the refugees under their care, was done by the advice and with the full knowledge of Mr. Conger, to whom the perplexing questions were referred for counsel; and their associates have unanimously recorded their deliberate approval of what they did. Mr. Tewksbury says of the supplies used for the refugees immediately after the siege, wherever obtained:

"All this we either paid for on the spot or left I. O. U.'s with the parties in possession, which same we have in every case paid when presented by the proper parties."

As to the charge of looting by missionaries, we have, besides their own denials, the explicit testimony of one wholly outside their number, whose position gave him exceptional facilities for knowing the facts. Mr. R. E. Bredon, Deputy Inspector-General of the Imperial Maritime Customs of China, who was in Peking throughout the siege and remained for some time afterward, wrote on October 3d to the *North China Daily Mail*:

"I heard in the Legation, before we were enabled to leave it, that the missionaries had taken quantities of loot. I took special pains as a committeeman to investigate the truth of this assertion, and I found absolutely nothing to confirm it."

The alternative, if these gentlemen had not undertaken to care for these refugees as they did, should be considered. The refugees were more than five hundred in number; they had gone through the siege of Peking and had given such effective aid in the defence that Mr. Conger, in writing to the missionaries four days after the siege was raised, said:

"But for your intelligent and successful planning and the uncomplaining execution of the Chinese, I believe our salvation would have been impossible."

When the Empress fled to Shensi, a thousand miles away, and the court followed her, all Chinese authority in Peking ceased, and the Allies policed the captured and ruined city. They declared that they could not provide for these native refugees. There was no one else to whom these hapless ones could look for help, but their missionary friends and leaders. If these failed, then they must be turned into the streets of Peking, or into the lawless and ravaged districts outside, to starve, or to perish by the sword. The Boxers and those who acted with the Boxers had robbed them of all they possessed, had destroyed their homes, had driven them into exile, had slain hundreds and thousands of their associates in cold blood. What should the missionaries have done? Every sentiment of gratitude for help rendered in times of deadly peril, of sympathy with homeless, defenceless, persecuted and trusting men and women, demanded that they find for the refugees shelter and food and clothing, as far as it was in their power. And that is precisely what they did. Had they taken care of themselves and left these to perish, their names would have been branded with infamy throughout the civilized world. And when, at Mr. Conger's suggestion and with the approval of the other Ambassadors, Dr. Ament and Mr. Tewksbury took their native protégés to abandoned courts of Boxers or Boxer sympathizers, and sustained them by what they found there, they did the only sensible thing that could be done. Let their critics tell us what else they should have done.

In a letter of November 18th, which was given at once to the public, Dr. Ament says that he "seized the palace of a petty prince," who had harbored the Boxers for many weeks, and sat

as judge on the execution of the native converts in that part of the city. This has seemed to some to indicate violence, disregard of law and practical robbery. But Dr. Ament had no soldiers to aid him; his refugees were unarmed men, women and children; the owner of the courts had fled, and there was no one to oppose him. He did what Mr. Conger advised; he took possession for the time, and used what he found for the temporary relief of himself and his dependents, who had no other shelter or resource. The *seizure* was the occupancy of these quarters without violence, without opposition, upon the warrant of an imperative necessity and of Mr. Conger's word. And the question is still a pressing one—What else should he have done?

But, of course, these arrangements could not last very long. Some other provision must be made, something that should look toward a more permanent settlement. The Allied Powers decided that they could do nothing for these Christian Chinese. The Chinese government, as has been said already, did not exist as a force to which an appeal could be made in Peking or in any region round about. And so, what was done had to be done without reference to the Chinese government on the one side, or the direct action of the Allied Powers on the other. In this absence of wonted authority, much was left to individual initiative; things necessary to be done have been done as they could be, not in the usual way. In the ordinary course of things, it belonged, doubtless, to the Chinese government to see to the reinstatement of the refugees who were on the hands of the missionaries: but that government had ceased to act, and only resumed action when Li Hung Chang assumed authority. The securing of such relief might well have come from the American Legation; but, in the confused and uncertain conditions following the siege, it was deemed inexpedient for the Legation to attempt it.

It was under these circumstances that Messrs. Ament and Tewksbury struck out the plan, which they have followed with such remarkable success, of securing indemnity for the Chinese who had suffered losses, from the very villages where these losses had been incurred. In this course, they have had the open and public approval of Mr. Conger and other authorities, and have followed a well-known Chinese usage. With great energy and good sense and patience, which have won the commendation of the Ambassadors in Peking, of the Chinese Commissioners of

Peace, Li Hung Chang and Prince Ching, and of the native authorities themselves in the several villages where they have gone, these gentlemen have secured the indemnity that was justly due, *not for themselves, not for the mission*, let it be clearly understood, but wholly and solely *for the Chinese who were dependent upon them*. Those who had robbed and dispossessed these people were the very ones to whom appeal was made by the missionary, not with military force to back him, but with his own personal influence and the justice of the case to sustain his plea that they make good the loss which they had inflicted, and provide for those whom they had made outcasts. The good sense of the head men of these Chinese villages acknowledged the justice of the claim, and most of these exiled Chinese are reinstated in their villages. New homes are promised them and support until they can provide for it. Money was brought in such amounts as to constitute a fund for the support of widows and orphans, and for the re-establishment of churches that had been destroyed. According to immemorial custom in China, these villages, through their head men, are responsible for the gross indignities and losses inflicted on innocent men and women within their walls. They knew these people had been wronged, and that the village ought to repair the wrong. The head men acted for the village, used the common property of the village to reimburse the losses, and assumed the duty of meting out justice to the individual offenders. It is the testimony of Dr. Ament and Mr. Tewksbury that the people where these settlements have been made are pleased with the result, and that the outlook for missionary work has not been destroyed, as some reports would seem to imply, but is better in some respects than it ever was before.

Mr. Tewksbury presents in some detail the conditions on which restitution was made by the villages. He says:

"The four articles following are practically the basis on which our settlements have been made. At a meeting of various denominational missions at Peking they were approved for substance. Indemnity for Chinese only:

- "1. Cemetery and suitable burial for adherents murdered.
- "2. Pensions for the aged, for widows and orphans, and for others left by the Boxer outrages without adequate support or helpers.
- "3. Money compensation for property destroyed was reckoned, in general, about one-third above the value of the property, which may be called a *primitive* indemnity. We asked no indemnity for life except where there were individuals left without support. All money to be in

care of the church, and no payment to be made to individual Christians until claims for indemnity have been audited by committee of foreigners and natives appointed by the church. Any balance after all claims are paid to be used as designated by the church.

"4. If desired by us, in any village where disturbances have occurred, a suitable location shall be provided for a Christian chapel."

Mr. Tewksbury further writes:

"Li Hung Chang, in instructions lately issued, as governor of the province, not only makes it the duty of his officials to pay indemnity, but also takes it for granted that the murderer shall be arrested. When collected this indemnity must be handed to the church people in open court, that all may know that justice has been done."

In regard to these settlements, if we ask who are the injured persons, the answer is plain. They are those who were robbed and whose homes were destroyed. If we ask who were guilty, the answer is equally clear: The Boxers who robbed and burned and slew without restraint, *and the towns that harbored them and shared in their crimes*. And if we inquire further what was due these outraged and exiled men, the answer is obvious: Reinstatement in their towns, the rebuilding of their homes, reimbursement for their losses, support for widows and orphans whose natural supporters had been slain, and security for the future. And this is what *was* secured for them, and it is *all* that was secured. This is not looting or robbery; but the restitution of stolen goods; it is not extortion, but justice, as much so in China as in America; the money in the hands of the guilty villagers *was* "tainted money," till it was paid back to those from whom it had been stolen; then it became honest money once more.

Who approved of these settlements? Mr. Conger, the United States Minister; Mr. Rockhill, the special United States Commissioner, who declares "*the arrangements satisfactory and fair, both to Chinese and foreigners*"; Li Hung Chang, the governor of the province, whose lieutenant "*decided the amounts and method of settling*"; the officials of the several villages where such settlements were made, many of whom came voluntarily and made the required restitution. Who complains of these settlements? So far as heard from, not one of the parties most affected, not one of the correspondents who have visited the missionaries and learned what they have done; no one else who is fully acquainted with the facts of the case.

Why was one-third additional to the actual damages included in the settlement? It was a part of the restitution which the villages owed to those of their own citizens who had suffered outrage

and exile, as well as the loss of property, at their hands or by their fault. The property destroyed in such cases never covers all the loss. The missionaries are the only source of information on this point, and they have not said enough about this feature of the case to make it altogether plain. Dr. Ament speaks of the "one-third" as used in supporting widows and orphans, those whose natural wage-earners had been murdered by the Boxers and their accomplices in these villages. Mr. Tewksbury speaks of it as the proper measure of money compensation for property destroyed. This additional one-third was an integral part of the settlement, agreed upon and accepted by the village officials without a murmur, approved by Li Hung Chang and by his lieutenant. No one in China appears to have raised a question about it. It is difficult to see why any one else should be disturbed about it.

The alternative to what has thus been so wisely, courageously and successfully done, must always be borne in mind. These hundreds of Chinese who had done no harm but had suffered grievous wrongs, who had wrought with the marines and the missionaries and the Legations for their mutual defence in Peking, would have been left to the tender mercies of Boxers and robbers or to perish of starvation. The good sense of all who see and understand these things will at once affirm that these missionaries did a justifiable and wise and worthy deed. No man has suffered wrong at their hands, but a great wrong has been righted, and has been righted in accordance with native customs, and with the approval of every authority that could be consulted. If any one can suggest a better, more effective, a simpler way in which to deal with a problem of this kind, let the suggestion be made. We have seen as yet, from among those who so freely criticise these things, not the slightest intimation of any other practical way of dealing with this emergency.

These points, therefore, seem clear:

1. The efforts of the missionaries have saved the lives of hundreds of the Chinese refugees, who with them went through the siege of Peking and helped to save the Legations, and thus placed the Allied Powers in their debt.

2. The utterly abnormal conditions which have prevailed since the siege have demanded exceptional treatment, and in dealing with them the missionaries have shown great caution, courage and wisdom.

3. The indemnities secured were wholly for the Chinese whom the Boxers had robbed and outraged; not a penny has been asked or used for missionary losses of any kind.

4. The "amounts and method of settling" these indemnities, the additional third as well as the rest, were decided by the deputy of Li Hung Chang, the governor of the province; they are declared "satisfactory and fair both to Chinese and foreigners" by Mr. Rockhill; and they were acceptable to the village officials.

In extraordinary and abnormal conditions, these men have carried through a necessary, but delicate and perplexing, undertaking, in a large-hearted, high-minded way, which has enhanced their personal reputation and reflected fresh credit on the missionary name. They have had the approval of their missionary associates; they have consulted all existing authorities and have had the approval of all. They have pursued a wise and far-seeing course, in saving a remnant out of the wrecks of the Christian communities which the Boxers left behind them, to be the nucleus of new churches and schools, and of a nobler enterprise when peace is restored. The friends of missions, the advocates of good order and just government in China, sane-minded and generous-hearted men everywhere, will not hesitate to pay them the tribute of praise and admiration for what they have done.

It is not a light thing to speak evil of these men without the amplest reason. They belong to that group of missionaries, of whom three at Paoting-fu and ten in Shansi met a martyr's death. Their repute is as high, their record is as clear, as were those of that martyr host. We grant that nothing can excuse evil deeds in a missionary; but we also insist that nothing can excuse the traducing of an honest man's good name. It is true of the missionaries, as of any others, that every man is to be adjudged innocent until he is proved guilty. No such proof in this case has yet been furnished. The more we hear from them, the closer we investigate, the clearer is their course, the nobler seem their deeds. Their vindication, if not already complete, is sure to come. Of each of them it may be said:

"He knew to bide his time,
And can his fame abide,
Still patient in his simple faith sublime,
Till the wise years decide."

JUDSON SMITH.